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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 002733

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USPACOM ALSO FOR J5
SECDEF/OSD/ISA/AP TOOLAN/REDMAN
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TAGS: [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [PINS](#) [RP](#)
SUBJECT: MILF AGREES TO PERMIT ARMY OPERATIONS ON BASILAN

REF:QA: MANILA 2688
QB: MANILA 2629
QC: MANILA 2575
QD: MANILA 2503
QE: MANILA 2474
QF: MANILA 2428
QG: MANILA 2369
QH: MANILA 2358
QI: MANILA 2344

Classified By: Pol/C Tom Gibbons for reasons 1.4 (b) and
(d)

¶1. (C) Summary. In a significant show of cooperation with Philippine military forces, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) has agreed to relocate MILF communities on Basilan to give the army greater freedom to pursue Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) terrorists responsible for the July 10 beheadings of ten Marines. Joint government and MILF monitoring posts near the repositioned MILF communities will seek to maintain the peace process during pursuit operations. Separately, a judge is considering a motion to reinvestigate the evidence used to issue arrest warrants July 26 for 130 suspects sought in the Marine killings. A prime suspect in the beheadings who surrendered August 9 has implicated three ASG members and has offered to turn state witness against them. MILF cooperation on Basilan contrasts sharply with renewed tension on neighboring Jolo, where Philippine armed forces are waging an intensified battle against insurgent Moro National Liberation Front forces (septel). End Summary.

MILF to Reposition on Basilan

¶2. (C) Government, military, and MILF negotiators agreed "in principle" August 9 to reposition the MILF in Tipo Tipo and Al-Barka to other locations on Basilan, according to Ryan Sullivan, head of the government peace negotiation panel. Sullivan said international monitoring team leader Major General Dato Ismael played a key role in facilitating the agreement, which would allow government security forces to pursue more freely ASG members responsible for the July 10 beheadings.

¶3. (C) Sullivan noted that Basilan provincial authorities and local monitoring teams are currently identifying locations on the island for the impending move. MILF leaders are weighing very carefully the security implications and logistical requirements of the prospective

sites, and whether to concentrate or disperse MILF communities.

14. (C) Sullivan said that Joint Monitoring Outposts will be established by the Philippine military and MILF wherever the communities are ultimately repositioned. He added that the outposts will serve as the principal coordinating mechanism to uphold the peace process during pursuit operations against Abu Sayyaf.

Motion for Re-Investigation

15. (C) Sullivan said that the public attorney's office filed a motion for re-investigation of the Philippine National Police evidence upon which 130 arrest warrants were issued July 26 against suspects in the July 10 beheadings. Sullivan noted that MILF members, local religious figures, and even some persons already deceased were included among the 130 suspects. If the motion is approved, said Sullivan, the 130 arrest warrants will be temporarily withdrawn by the court pending the outcome of the re-investigation.

Basilan Beheading Suspect Surrenders

16. (C) One of the Joint Committee's four prime suspects in the July 10 beheadings -- Buhari Jamiri -- surrendered August 9 to a television news crew on Basilan. According to Sullivan, a reporter conducted a videotaped interview with Jamiri before turning him over to the National Bureau

MANILA 00002733 002 OF 002

of Investigation (NBI). From Basilan, Jamiri was taken by NBI agents to Zamboanga and then onward to Manila for interrogation. Sullivan said that during the interview, Jamiri admitted to assisting the ASG and MILF in carrying out the July 10 ambush of the Philippine Marines in Tipo Tipo. Jamiri also confessed to cutting off the hands of some of the Philippine Marines, but denied committing any of the ten beheadings. According to Sullivan, Jamiri identified members of the ASG as the perpetrators of the beheadings, and offered to turn state witness against them.

"Extra-Judicial Confession"

17. (C) During an August 10 press interview, NBI National Capital Region Director Ruel Lasala said Jamiri gave a four-page "extrajudicial confession" giving the names of Umair Indama, Atting Indama, and Suaib Kalibun as those responsible for the July 10 mutilation and beheading of the Philippine Marines. Lasala noted that NBI agents were continuing to interrogate Jamiri, and that a decision whether to include Jamiri in the witness protection program would be made by the government prosecutor and judge.

18. (C) According to Sullivan, ASG members Umair Indama and Suaib Kalibun were among the perpetrators of the beheadings identified during the Joint Committee's investigation (ref b). Sullivan added that another member of the Indama clan -- ASG sub-commander Puruji Indama -- was suspected to be involved in an August 6 attack on a Philippine Marine patrol in Barangay Silangkum, Tipo Tipo. No casualties were reported on either side during the brief armed encounter.

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JONES